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SUBJECT: DEPSEC LEW STRESSES USG COMMITMENT TO COOPERATION

11. (U) Summary. Deputy Secretary Lew uQ his visit to Mexico November 22-24 to stress to the GOM and Mexican civil society the USGQs commitment to Mexico as it takes on organized crime and builds stronger law enforcement institutions. Lew underscored the importance of observing human rights as central to the agenda of countering organized crime. GOM officials welcomed strong cooperation with the U.S. in this endeavor, acknowledging the need to expand efforts on the local level and strengthen intelligence capabilities. Mexican civil society leaders believe Mexico can only claim success if Mexican civil society embraces more fully a Qculture of lawfulnessQ and the attendant responsibility entailed with holding government leaders and institutions accountable. The Deputy SecretaryQs visit to the airport offered him an opportunity to observe how the GOM is putting some of our inspection technology to good use in detecting narcotics, laundered currency, and other contraband. The Mexican press reported favorably on the visit focusing on assurances that U.S. cooperation would continue. Embassy Staff appreciated LewQs engagement in a town hall event and exchanges on the QDDR. End Summary.

Agreement on Way Ahead on Cooperation

12. (U) The Deputy Secretary used his meeting with leading members of MexicoQs law enforcement community, its functional equivalent of the DeputyQs committee, to recognize the sacrifices Mexico has made in battling organized crime and to convey our determination to provide Mexico with the assistance it needs to be successful. The U.S. is committed to doing its part by attacking drug demand in the U.S. and devoting more resources to halting the flow of weapons south. It is vital that we produce results on our shared investment and be prepared to adapt our approach if the desired results are lacking. Our shared commitment of tying cooperation to clearly defined needs and shared objectives may have contributed to some delays in delivering assistance, but it was time well spent. High ticket items such as inspection equipment are either coming on line or will be arriving shortly. We attach great importance to developing a pilot program in Ciudad Juarez that provides the military with the support it needs, builds up the capacity of the state and local police, and promotes greater overall coordination. Meanwhile, we look forward to our cooperation transitioning from the present focus on hardware into the more complicated phase of institution building.

13. (SBU) Deputy Secretary of the Interior Ministry, Geronimo Gutierrez, assured the Deputy Secretary that combating organized crime remains President CalderonQs highest priority. Calderon receives

weekly briefing on the security situation, including updates on the status of U.S. assistance. He acknowledged the government's challenge in producing definitive evidence of success as violence continues to rise. He remarked that building strong institutions may prove even more difficult but agreed it was just as important as disrupting the activities of the drug cartels. The U.S. and Mexico must speak publicly from the same script; he suggested our two governments work together in producing a joint report on an issue tied to our efforts to combat organized crime. In a similar vein, the Director of Mexico's intelligence agency, CISEN, spoke to the need for greater GOM-USG cooperation on intelligence.

Human Rights and Combatting Crime Must Go Together

¶4. (SBU) In all of his meetings, Lew stressed the need to build respect for human rights and adherence to the rule of law in connection to all efforts to combat organized crime. Foreign Minister Espinosa commented that this is also President Calderon's position. She had personally engaged with Defense Minister Galvan to underscore the need for transparency in the handling of alleged human rights abuses. In a meeting with Deputy Secretaries from all major Mexican security agencies, including Defense, Lew stressed that human rights are not a side concern, but are central to President Obama's agenda. He said that for both the Administration and Congress, adherence to human rights is critical to securing

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funding for our counternarcotics agenda.

¶5. (SBU) In meetings with both Foreign Minister Espinosa and inner-agency law enforcement officials, Foreign Affairs Deputy Secretary Julian Ventura and Ambassador Pascual reviewed progress made toward developing a structured bilateral human rights dialogue. Draft diplomatic notes have been exchanged for comments. There is agreement to include the Army, Navy, Foreign Affairs, the Interior Ministry and other key players. The structured dialogue will help ensure that the focus is on transparency and accountability. The GOM discussed these measures openly in an interagency context, reflecting a positive shift toward incorporating human rights into our bilateral agenda.

Fighting Crime with Development

¶6. (U) Deputy Secretary of the Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL) Gustavo Merino Juarez and SEDESOL Chief of Staff Ignacio Quesada spoke to the contribution SEDESOL was making to the government's efforts to combat organized crime. The government's program Oportunidades (Opportunities) had already developed programs in each with a health, education, and food component -- that had helped over 5.2 million families. The ministry aimed to cover 850,000 more families. Projects extended across a wide gamut to include scholarships for underprivileged children to housing for impoverished communities. Borrowing extensively from Colombia's efforts with communities at risk in Medellin, Mexico sought similarly to target youth at risk in Ciudad Juarez by building roads, schools, and parks in impoverished communities facing high rates of crime and violence.

Community Leaders Accept Responsibility

17. (U) Leaders of civil society organizations devoted to fighting crime, with a particular focus on kidnapping based on some compelling personal experiences, offered the Deputy Secretary their frank assessment of the ills that plague Mexican society and their take on a way ahead. They conveyed frustration that Mexico had not more fully embraced the accoutrements of a developed democracy with the political transition that had commenced under President Fox but conceded much of the blame lay with them. Civil society needed to hold its leaders accountable for delivering on their promises. It also needed to attach greater importance to promoting a culture of lawfulness and building alliances with law enforcement. They welcomed greater cooperation between the USG and the GOM to the extent it contributed to longer term solutions including stronger institutions. However, they also urged the U.S. to do more to tackle some of its own challenges including drug demand and arms smuggling.

Airport Visit Places Spotlight on Hardware

18. (SBU) The Deputy Secretary wrapped up his trip to Mexico City with a visit to the Mexican Customs cargo facilities at Mexico City International Airport where he received a briefing on several types of Non-Intrusive Inspection Equipment (NIIE) the USG seeks to deliver to the GOM under the Merida Initiative. After learning about a Pallet VACIS (Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System), a cobalt-sourced gamma radiation unit used for inspecting commercial cargo pallets, the Deputy Secretary rode in a ZBV X-Ray Backscatter Van and viewed real-time X-Ray images as the vehicle inspected a line of loaded commercial air cargo carriers. These vans which inspect the contents of commercial buses and light commercial and private vehicles for recently-fired weapons, explosives, drugs, chemicals, radioactive material, and laundered money are mobile, offering the GOM a means to thwart traffickers attempting to circumvent fixed inspection points. The Deputy Secretary also viewed an X-Ray minivan which officials use to inspect airport passenger luggage. Under the Merida Initiative, the Mexican federal police have ordered 10 of these minivans to inspect the contents of commercial bus passenger luggage and other small-container commercial and private cargo along the nation's highways. Mexican airport officials

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concluded their presentation with a slide show of multi-million dollar contraband seizures they have made using NIIE.

Press Stresses USG Commitment to Continued Cooperation

19. (U) The Deputy Secretary participated in a round table discussion with journalists and an exclusive interview with Mexico's premier television network, Televisa, in the course of his visit to Mexico. He was quoted extensively in all major newspapers, radio, wire services, and Internet media outlets on 11/24, commenting on the Merida Initiative and the way forward, human rights in Mexico, institutional reform, and cooperation against narco-trafficking, among other topics. Much of the Mexican press focused on his assurances that the U.S. remain committed to continued cooperation with Mexico in its efforts to combat organized crime. He affirmed that he had raised the subject of human rights in his meetings largely in the context of building the kinds of institutions Mexico needs to promote respect for

the rule of law. Press on the visit was overwhelming positive and generally accurate drawing helpful attention to the constructive nature of U.S. cooperation with Mexico in fighting organized crime and building stronger institutions, while reporting frankly on the Deputy's open yet respectful handling of human rights issues.

¶10. (SBU) Comment. The Deputy Secretary's visit provided a timely boost to a complicated agenda with Mexico. His intense exchange with Foreign Minister Espinosa reinforced the breath of the relationship from Honduras to security to human rights to the resources we need to succeed. In effect, by convening a defacto Deputy's committee with the Mexicans, Lew also underscored that we have a fluid and high level common agenda between the U.S. and Mexico. The same issues are now of central concern to both countries. One Mexican Deputy Minister commented later that Lew reinforced that our agenda is shared, but this means Mexico has to carry out its responsibilities. When you see the commitment of your partners, it reinforces the fact that you too must act. That message conveyed by Lew verbally and by example, continues to reinforce an intense pattern of engagement with our Mexican security and foreign affairs colleagues. End Comment.

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